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October 29, 1999

Jane Henney, Commissioner
Food & Drug Administration
5600 Fisher Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Henney

This letter is about the attached advertisement titled *Unlabeled, untested...and you're eating it*, which I saw in the New York Times. Setting aside for a moment the issue of testing of genetically modified foods, I am simply appalled that these foods are on the shelves of grocery stores in my neighborhood without labels informing me that they have been genetically modified as such.

For me the issue is not whether the government or the food industry considers these genetically modified products to be safe. I have personal and religious reasons for wanting to avoid these products, and, as a consumer, I want the choice to be able to avoid them. I cannot avoid these genetically modified foods if they do not contain labels indicating the fact that they are indeed genetically modified and/or the nature of the genetic modification. It does not help to tell me to simply buy certified organic to avoid genetically modified products, because organic products are not always available. Sometimes I must simply choose between non-organic products some of which are genetically modified and some of which are not.

To return to the topic of testing, to the extent that harmful effects of genetically modified foods on humans might not be known for many years (perhaps a decade or more), some of us consumers may make the choice to not participate as guinea pigs in what future generations may look back on as the mass experiment of distributing genetically modified food into the markets of the American consumers. To sum up, labeling gives a choice to the consumers. Your current policy of non-labeling does not. As a consumer, I wish to register my vote for the FDA to require labeling of all genetically modified foods as soon as possible. I am appalled that labeling is not required already.

Sincerely yours,

Millard A. Murphy

Millard A. Murphy
Attorney at law

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